

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3465
ANSWERED ON:22.12.2004
ALLOCATION OF MORE FUNDS TO STATES
Purandeswari Smt. Daggubati

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the States overlooking the Himalayas have urged for allocation of more funds to preserve and protect their eco-system;
- (b) if so, their charter of demands after their meeting in Dehradun in October, 2004; and,
- (c) the action taken/proposed to be taken to assist them to protect the natural heritage?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. A Charter of demands has been received in the Ministry of Environment & Forests after their meeting in October, 2004 at Dehradun from the States overlooking the Himalayas urging for allocation of more funds to preserve and protect their eco-system as at Annexure-I.

(c): Since the demands are in the form of recommendations, these are to be expanded into detailed proposal. Only on receipt of such proposals worked out by the States, Central Government will be able to take further steps for consideration.

ANNEXURE-I

The Charter of Demands

We the Delegates of Himalayan States of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, West Bengal and Uttaranchal, have met during the Conference of Forest and Environment Ministers of Himalayan States at Dehradun on 11th – 12th October 2004, along with the representatives from various Research and Training institutions and have discussed the issues of mutual concern related to forest; environment and biodiversity conservation for the Himalayan region and its People.

Thanking, the Government of India for having increased its share from 75% to 90% in the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme for the special category states.

Realising:

1. That the diverse ecosystems represented by the Himalayan provide critical eco- services to multiple stakeholders and are crucial to human security and livelihoods at regional, national and global level.
2. That climate change and global warming are having a serious adverse impact on various facets of Himalayan ecology.
3. That the Himalayan region being ecologically fragile, landslides, cloud bursts, forest fires, flash floods and other natural and man made disasters continue to afflict us.
4. That while ensuring sustainable management of the natural resources of Himalayan region, the livelihood and developmental needs and aspirations of the local communities, who have contributed to the conservation of these vital natural resources must also be addressed urgently.

Appreciating:

1. That the Himalayas are home to a spectrum of cultures having their unique folklore, architecture ethnic practices, along with very diverse social and environmental conditions.
2. That conservation of the rich biodiversity wealth of the Himalayas translates into minimized opportunities of economic growth for the region.
3. The need to initiate a dialogue with neighbouring countries to build a synergy amongst the Himalayan region and to learn from each other to work towards the upliftment of our people.
4. That existing special dispensations available to some states should be continued.

Agreeing:

1. That Himalayan States have taken measures to conserve their forests to achieve continued flow of eco-services and need to be given enough economic incentives to enable their people to conserve their forests.
2. That there is a need to seek greater support at the National and International level for the conservation and sustainable development of the Himalayan region.
3. That there is need for Himalayan States to work together to promote the Indian Himalayas as a global destination and to develop inter-state tourism circuits to tap its eco-tourism potential.
4. That there is need for an appropriate mechanism for experience sharing, cooperation and constant dialogue.

Reserve :

1. To mark together for the protection of the environment and sustainable development while maintaining and enriching the bio-diversity as a wealth of the region.
2. To continue this dialogue for cooperation amongst Himalayan States.
3. To evolve institutional mechanisms for cooperation amongst Himalayan States.
4. To take initiatives for the formulation of projects for funding by bilateral and multilateral institutions.
5. To document and disseminate the critical contribution that the Himalayas make to the well being of areas both within and outside the region.
6. To set up a Confederation of Himalayan States to provide a forum for dialogue, experience sharing and cooperation amongst Himalayan States.

Recommend:

1. That eco-system services provided by Himalayan States should be amply appreciated and taken into consideration while deciding upon devolution of funds.
2. That national policies and legislation should address the special needs and aspirations of the Himalayas and its people.
3. That the Govt. of India set up a Himalayan Development Authority to consider the issues and concerns of the Himalayan region and its people.
4. That the Govt. of India also set up a Fund for Himalayan Forest and Environment Protection to mobilize additional resources for this region.
5. In order to reduce pressure on existing natural resources, subsidy towards cost of LPG and for development of alternate construction technologies should be increased.
6. That scope of the Natural Calamity Fund should be expanded to address special phenomenon like forest fires, land slides, loss of agricultural land by flash floods and cloudburst, etc.
7. Institutions engaged in study of aspects of Himalayan environment and ecology be strengthened and their priorities be clearly realigned to meet the needs of the Himalayan region, New institutions may also be established to meet emerging needs.
8. A special programme for conservation of Himalayan Glaciers and wetlands should be initiated.
9. That all the villages in the Himalayas should be considered as forest fringe villages and adequate additional resources should be mobilized for their development.
10. The concerns of the Trans Himalayan region should be addressed expeditiously.